

BUSINESS & LABOR

EXHIBIT NO. 2  
DATE 1-28-09  
BILL NO. SB 253

1-28-2009

Chairperson Joe Balyeat, and committee, for the record my name is Andrea Martin. I am here representing myself. I am a service professional. I work at Bennys Bistro here in Helena and I oppose Bill 253 which would allow tips as credit against minimum wage.

As it is, being paid minimum wage and working hard to earn my tips, I do not make enough money to cover my general costs and then to also cover my medical bills. I live pretty frugally and in order to make it work I often work two or three jobs. Sunday is my only day off, and sometimes I have to work that too.

My story is not unique; I assure you most of my co-workers have similar situations. So what happens if Bill 253 passes? What if employers can pay us less than minimum wage? I know I'll have to cut costs somewhere. Should I stop eating? Should I quit heating my apartment? Do I stop sleeping so I can work four or five jobs? These are not choices anyone should have to make.

The assumption that the men and women who serve us lunch walk away with astronomical sums in their pockets is simply untrue. It is also a false assumption that lowering our wages will save employers money. Restaurant employers often pay their kitchen staff an adjusted wage because they know that their servers will tip them out. For example if a server's tips are supposed take the place of his/her wage, that means the rest of the staff will get tipped out less, and the employer will have to pay them more.

Clearly, Bill 253 is the wrong choice for Montanans.

I urge you to vote against Bill 253.